Production of Onion and Potato

777. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a record production of onion and potato in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to protect the interests of the growers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) The record onion production of 54.7 lakh tonnes was achieved in 1998-99. The potato production in 1998-99 was 224.9 lakh tonnes while the record production of 242.2 lakh tonnes was achieved in 1996-97.

(c) To protect the interests of growers at the time of glut, the Government implements the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS). To improve the post harvest management of horticulture produce, the Government has recently launched the scheme of Capital Investment Subsidy for Construction/Expansion/Modernisation of Cold Storage and Storage for horticultural produce.

Soil Testing Laboratories

778. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Karnataka has sent a proposal for setting up ten Mobile Soil Testing Laboratories in the State under a Centrally sponsored scheme;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme, the number of such centres located in the country during the last three years, year-wise and State-wise and the financial allocation for each centre; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government to the present proposal of Government of Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO):

(a) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'Balanced and Integrated Use of Fertilizers', financial assistance is provided for strengthening/ setting up soil testing laboratories in the States/UTs. However, the scheme has no provision to extend this financial assistance for setting up mobile soil testing laboratories.

The proposal of Government of Karnataka for setting up ten mobile soil testing laboratories has not been received in this Ministry.

(b) and (c) The question does not arise in view of (a) above.

Additional Financial Assistance to Karnataka

779. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Karnataka Government has requested for additional financial assistance to the extent of Rs. 200 Cr. for meeting the extensive damage caused to the life and property during the October, 1999 floods in the State; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposals and the likely date by which the requested assistance will be released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) The Government of Karnataka had submitted a Memorandum seeking assistance of Rs. 131.41 crore from the National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFCR) in the wake of floods in the State. The Memorandum is under consideration in accordance with the established procedure. The National Calamity Relief Committee (NCRC) will consider request of the State Government, take all relevant aspects into accounts and approve the quantum of assistance, if any, from the NFCR, which is than released to the State Government.